



Las Vegas

m a g a z i n e

Kennedy in Vegas

THE WOMEN, THE MOB,
HOW HIS INDISCRETIONS
MAY HAVE GOT HIM KILLED

Elvis

A 20-YEAR TRIBUTE WITH
COL. PARKER & FRIENDS

Drew Carey

FROM RAGS IN VEGAS
TO RICHES IN HOLLYWOOD

PLUS CARICATURES FROM A
HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR, TRIPS
TO DALLAS AND SCOTTSDALE,
VEGAS SPORTS BOOKS, FOOD,
WINE AND WOLFGANG PUCK

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BY RICHARD S. GUBBE

NEW PIECES

THE KENNEDY
MURDER



A task force of researchers and journalists working for Las Vegas Magazine recently traveled to Dallas, Chicago and Las Vegas in an effort to learn more of the truth about the death of John F. Kennedy. More photographic and acoustical information has been made available, and combined with fresh information and eyewitness testimony, many misconers about the shooting in Dallas can be put to rest. Other questions remain. Some secrets preserved by the government may reveal the final pieces of the puzzle in 2029. The following are three stories dealing with Kennedy's term in office, his assassination and subsequent cover-up, and his connections to the Sands Hotel & Casino.

DALLAS — Amidst a sea of theories, a forest of books and mountains of speculation, the circumstances behind the death of President John F. Kennedy remain a quagmire consisting of scents of truth, the stench of misinformation and a hefty aroma of lingering intrigue.

Who actually did the shooting after an acoustic test confirmed the firing of four shots in Dealey Plaza on Nov. 22, 1963? The shooting teams, unreleased documents and tests using the latest technology are now the focus of the latest wave of inquiries constant for 34 years.

The first books, reports and the Warren Commission have proved to be damaging to finding the true killers behind the assassination. The influx of misinformation into the fray only prevented an immediate solution of the crime. The fact that Bobby Kennedy's organized crime committee stopped meeting after the shooting of his brother tells volumes of who Bobby Kennedy feared. Those who wished to leave a smoke screen in front of the real killers have succeeded. What can safely be assumed is that Lee Harvey Oswald did not pull the trigger and probably was, as he put it, "a patsy."

If Oswald were to stand trial today for the assassination, a two-bit lawyer from nowhere could get the once-fingered political activist off in a short trial held in Boston. Acoustics tests, proper ballistics tests, the Abraham

PUZZLE

Zapruder video and eye witnesses available in 1963 and others still alive would get Oswald a quick acquittal in 1997. Gathering information about the most famous murder in American history has become like putting together a jigsaw puzzle that got mixed with another puzzle. By piecing together FBI reports, wiretaps and murders that happened after the assassination, coupled with eyewitness accounts and hearsay from people unable to validate, a pattern begins to develop and one puzzle remains.

Organized crime figures were not as clean as they thought in planning the execution of the most popular president ever. The assassination team, which appears may have been sanctioned by a national body of organized crime bosses and picked by three crime bosses, made mistakes the Warren Commission, the Committee on Assassinations, Lyndon B. Johnson and J. Edgar Hoover and the current president can no longer hold back. The public has demanded the truth and is getting it — trickle by trickle since Oswald declared his innocence. The hope of government is when the most sensitive material is released, everyone will be dead who had anything to do with this sharp turn in American history.

Las Vegas Magazine has learned through confidential sources that of the few documents left unreleased by the Committee on Assassinations, the remaining material contains the names of Johnny Rosselli and Carlo Marcello.

Virtually everything else from the Warren Commission has been released. The Committee on Assassinations studied the deaths of JFK and Martin Luther King until 1978. Although that committee didn't release everything, more has been released by a review board set up by President Clinton in 1994 after being mandated by Congress in 1992. The purpose of the board is to coordinate the release of any federal document or anything related to an assassination. The review board releases information to Clinton, who then has the option of releasing it to the public. The review board, mandated for three years, was established from a public outcry after the release of the Oliver Stone film *JFK*. In October, Clinton can decide to extend the committee another year. After 34 years, all the American public knows for certain is that Oswald didn't kill Kennedy by firing three straight shots from the Texas School Book Depository. What we do know is mostly derived from photographic and audio information considered technically sound. Analysis of tape from a motorcycle patrolman's dictabelt radio recorded at the Dallas police dispatch center at the time of the shooting was re-analyzed to show one shot came from a different location. The first two shots were 1.6 seconds apart. Oswald's Italian-made bolt-action rifle couldn't be fired in less than 2.5 seconds, according to results released.

Evidence also has arisen that proved Lee Harvey Oswald was indeed a patsy and was seen on the second floor of the Texas School Book Depository instead of the sixth floor shortly before the shooting. A woman who worked at the depository interviewed by the FBI shortly

after the shooting, she said she saw Oswald sitting on the second-floor cafeteria sipping a drink at nearly 12:20 p.m., less than 5 minutes before Kennedy drove up Elm Street. Although her testimony was not in the FBI report that was ultimately sent to the Warren Commission, she said that day, and many times since, that she saw Oswald on her way out. After the FBI questioned her, she thought she would be a small part of history. Today, she refuses to talk to anyone. She did not know how significant her observation was at the time. Kennedy was due to drive through between 12:20 p.m. and 12:25 p.m. to get to the Dallas Trade Mart. No one could have known he was five minutes late unless he/she was tuned in to one of two radio stations covering the parade.

When President Kennedy was shot in Dallas, everyone alive wanted to believe it was the Russians or some kook who gunned down the most publicly approved president ever. The sales job by the FBI, long since documented by paper and voice, has been the spearhead of the cover-up. The cover-up has been expansive and well-orchestrated to give so much misinformation that nothing is to be believed. There are said to be 38 people who had anything to do with the assassination that are dead as a result of being murdered. Only by putting bits and pieces of the puzzle together can an insightful human being get close to the truth.

A City Condemned

In 1963, Linda Stanford was a 9-year-old Texas schoolgirl who easily remembers the darkest day in Texas history. When her mother learned of the president being shot, she packed the family up and headed to Mississippi to stay with relatives.

"People blamed Dallas for what happened," Stanford says. "We were once famous for many good things. Now, we're labeled as the city where Kennedy was assassinated."

This dark cloud hangs over the city today, yet there is no talk about organized crime in Dallas. Mafia territories were set up long ago from the East through the Midwest. Crime families run territories that can encompass many states as in the case of Carlo Marcello, or a small district such as one in New York City for each of the five New York families. Dallas lies in the territory of the New Orleans don, and that hasn't changed.

Las Vegas Magazine has learned that key crime families in both cities still have contact disavowed in the past, although most Texans dismiss any presence of the Mafia in Dallas.

Too Many Deals

Kennedy made many deals to be elected and he made numerous deals after being elected. His father, Joseph, helped fix the election when Richard Nixon nearly had it won. Joe Kennedy was a rum runner, plain and simple, and that's the way the mob looked at him — as one of their own. The National Council for Organized Crime helped fix the election, thinking it had a clear four → 67

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years of sailing through life as calculated criminals, introducing drugs to big cities and siphoning off gambling profits from Las Vegas casinos. After becoming president, Kennedy shunned the mob in an arrogant, disrespectful manner. Bobby Kennedy's relentless pursuit of Sam Giancana, the Chicago don who made it possible for Jack Kennedy to squeak by in Illinois and win the closest election in history, caused repercussions that cost the father of two his life.

Bobby Kennedy's deporting of New Orleans don Carlo Marcello was no small insult to the mob who had decided that if John Kennedy were dead, Bobby would back off. That has been recorded in separate conversations with Carlo Marcello by private investigator Ed Becker and numerous FBI wiretaps.

The assassination was a dagger in the heart of a country in the midst of internal and external struggles. The Communist Party was the enemy and the battleground was Cuba. The time was the early 1960s and the fight was over money and power. With Batista in power in Cuba, the country was wide open to corruption. Mob ownership of casinos was lucrative and the Miami family under Santo Trafficante was prospering daily. The offshore banking availability gave way to the funneling and laundering of money in and out of the United States. The CIA, sponsors of the drug program in Southeast Asia, was not a pet program of Kennedy's.

The CIA, with Maheu in front, hired the mob to kill Fidel Castro, but the plot failed numerous times. Trafficante owed Castro for letting him leave Cuba alive after seizing his casinos and torturing Trafficante. Castro may have gotten his payment in full with information about the president and how he was planning to kill him. Kennedy's sexual indiscretions, the mess in Cuba, his wavering on supporting sending

troops to Vietnam and his turning loose of Bobby Kennedy on organized crime gave crime bosses all they needed for a motive to order his assassination. In the midst of searching for answers, the city of Las Vegas is a contributor in many ways. One key contribution of notoriety came from Rosselli, a man who ended up with a 55-gallon drum as a coffin. Rosselli admitted his contribution to the mess in Cuba, later confirmed by Maheu.

Former CIA operative Maheu admits to setting up the Cuba mission for the administration with Rosselli, the mob's front man at the time for setting up casino skimming operations in Vegas. Rarely mentioned in the crime by biographies and JFK murder specials, Rosselli was a man who once had everything and anything in Las Vegas. He

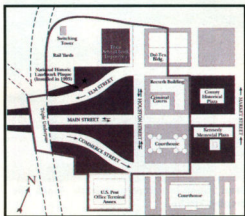
subversive named David Ferrie knew about everything and Garrison pursued him until Ferrie allegedly killed himself in his apartment shortly after being released after questioning by Garrison's staff.

Garrison tried to make a link between Ferrie and Jack Ruby, but that has been dismissed by competent investigators who interviewed Ruby's bar employees. No one ever remembered a bald man who wore cheap hair pieces and painted on his eyebrows. Ferrie was an accused homosexual who suffered from a disease that left him unable to grow body hair and the plot made great copy for the movie JFK in 1991.

In the category of misinformation, Garrison's book was at the top of the best-seller list. The book was a smoke screen to throw anyone off the path of the truth. Garrison died a year after the movie came out, but the eye-witness testimony of Las Vegas have made Garrison to be nothing more than a puppet of Carlo Marcello. While in office as the chief prosecutor, Garrison said Marcello was a solid citizen when asked why Marcello was never arrested in New Orleans. Marcello was reportedly worth \$43 million upon his death of natural causes. Not bad for a man deported in 1962, charged with two federal crimes and convicted of neither.

Garrison has been exposed by FBI and CIA surveillance documents as having visited the Sands Hotel & Casino and twice receiving \$5,000 credit lines at the Sands. The third time documented was when the CIA caught Rosselli and Garrison meeting in March 1967. Garrison denied the meeting to his death and the payoffs he received. When asked about the money, he said he was the man who kicked organized crime out of New Orleans and the question didn't dignify an answer.

Las Vegas Magazine has learned that Garrison visited the Sands to receive payoffs from the cage in the form of a line of credit as many as a dozen times. Garrison got the ➔ 97



Dealey Plaza
National Historic Landmark District

was on top. What is feared by some is that Rosselli may have been the head of the crew of Mafia hitmen who were hand picked by the top families in the United States to plot to kill Kennedy. He also is unaccounted for from FBI surveillance records for three days around the assassination. He was last seen in Los Angeles.

Garrison On The Take

This charge of corruption now can be leveled posthumously at Jim Garrison, the former district attorney in Louisiana who claimed he kicked organized crime out of New Orleans. Garrison made history when he opened his own investigation into the assassination in 1966. He tried to sell the theory that a gay

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credit line from casino manager Mario Marino, a known Marcello employee.

When interviewed by a group of journalists recently, Oliver Stone said he threw six conspiracy theories into the film because he couldn't tell which one was correct. Recent factual information has surfaced to create a sequel.

Searching for Answers

Kennedy went to Texas to mend a democratic rift and improve his popularity in the Deep South. He was sometimes described as a vain man who didn't like to see that his popularity had slipped. He brought his wife, who was extremely popular there, to help; hence, the reason for the open car. Kennedy also wanted to heal the wounds of bickering Texas democratic party members. Talking to a few state politicians was not the main reason for the trip; as Kennedy could have summoned the group to Washington and saved the trip. Instead, he used a two-day, four-city trip to flex his muscles.

The parade route chosen and released five days prior to the visit was a standard Dallas parade route. After driving through downtown Dallas, Kennedy was to drive to the new Dallas Trade Mart for a speech. That was not known until a few days prior. Kennedy also was considering a speech in a less-attractive neighborhood. The famed Texas School Book Depository, now the site of The Sixth Floor Museum, rests at a vantage point conducive to a shooting on a standard parade route. The connection of Oswald to the New Orleans don Marcello can be made and thus give credence to Oswald's claim he was only a patsy.

For mobsters, the reason for an ordered hit was easily understood. The Kennedy family had taken power and forgot who brought them to the dance. After many mishaps in Cuba trying to depose Castro, the reasons were expanded to include loss of income. The winding road begins in

windy Chicago when Joe Kennedy visited Giancana, who helped stuff Chicago ballot boxes in return for future favors that never came. Instead, Giancana got dragged in front of a Senate committee on organized crime and made to look foolish by Bobby Kennedy in his interrogation and condescending treatment of Giancana on the witness stand.

Giancana was the recognized head of the Chicago crime families who was given the blessing of none other than Al Capone to run the Chicago operation. Al was Sicilian like other family bosses, but Chicago was an eclectic town when decisions on hiring were made. Capone's man in Vegas and on the West Coast was Rosselli, who had the poise of a Wall Street businessman and the reputation as a violent man when it came time to prove a point. After Capone was out of the picture and the bodies hauled away, Giancana rose to power. Giancana's reputation was worse. Rosselli had Giancana's juice and full run of the Desert Inn and was able to roam in and out of the pit, in executive offices and the count room, Las Vegas Magazine has learned.

Chicago underworld figures refer to Rosselli with reverence while hinting of his involvement.

"Johnny Rosselli had plenty to do with it," one former associate said under the condition he not be identified.

"It was as if he pulled the trigger himself," said another former resident of Rosselli's neighborhood.

One night at the Desert Inn, Rosselli approached a young, classy showgirl who was out to see the Desert Inn on her off night. She escaped his clutches by making up a reason he bought to let her leave before she paid her dues.

"He was smooth, but he had the coldest eyes I ever saw," she recalled. "He made me shiver."

Not many escaped the reach of Rosselli.

The James Files Fiasco

Another Chicago thug is in jail in the Joliet state correctional facility,

one of the worst for state offenders in Illinois. James E. Files somehow got the attention to tell the FBI he killed John Kennedy. The FBI discounted his claims and went on its way. The story was leaked by a Texas field agent to Texas investigator Joe West. West befriended Files before he died, and Files agreed to talk in front of a camera to West's associate Bob Vernon. The testimony may sound riveting, but the errors in fact are enormous.

The most blatant fact Files uttered incorrectly was seeing Jack Ruby in Dealey Plaza after claiming he met Ruby that morning 40 miles away at a pancake house with Johnny Rosselli. Files said he gave changes in the parade route to Rosselli, but the route had never changed. Files said he had Ruby in his gun sight before the car turned on Elm.

Reporter John Newnam says Ruby was at the Dallas Morning News making last minute changes to an entertainment ad for his strip clubs. Newnam saw Ruby sitting at a desk at 12:20 p.m., five minutes and five blocks from the shooting.

Bob Porter, who worked as the movie and theater critic at the time, saw Ruby often at the paper and talked to him shortly after the president was killed.

"Everyone on the city desk was covering the parade," Porter, now the PR director at The Sixth Floor Museum, told LVM. "I was in the office that day. Everyone got thrown into it because we were the afternoon paper. Jack Ruby hung around the newspaper office as he hung around the police station, as he hung around the radio and TV stations. He was one of those gofer kind of people. We didn't have any security in those days and he'd walk in the elevator on the first floor and go up to the newsroom; you could walk over to anyone's desk. He'd be up there badgering us, trying to get us to run pictures of his third-rate comics. We'd run him off. Then he'd go complain to the editor and they'd run him off. An hour after the assassination, what we → 100

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were doing in our department was checking to see what live performances were going on. They had an arts show scheduled, a symphony was playing and we had the theaters. The light on my phone was flashing and I picked up and it was Jack Ruby. I looked over at our nightclub columnist and he was on the phone. I said 'Don's on the phone, Jack.' I explained to him what we were doing and he said 'what are the nightclub people doing?' I said a couple were going to close down for the weekend. He said, 'What do you think I should do?' I said, 'I don't know, Jack, hell, it's your club.' He said, 'Well, if they're closing,' and I said, 'That's what I understand.' He said, 'Well, maybe I should do that, too.' I said 'We'll put you down as closed for the weekend.' He said, 'Yeah, yeah.'

Files also changed his testimony on which side of the head he shot the president. Files said he shot the left side when the physical angle from where Files claims to have been and the direction the president was facing could not have happened. Files also claimed he parked the getaway car in the parking lot next to the DalTex building. The parking lot he said he parked his car in was not in existence and streets he said he drove on were under construction and closed at the time. Las Vegas Magazine has learned that news film shot the next day from a helicopter reveals Files' story to be outrageous at best.

Yet, NBC was ready to go prime time with the story as if they had solved the crime. Coming within weeks of airing the show, sources say, NBC backed off. Researchers around the country discredited Files. Dick Clark Productions, under producer Barry Adelman, bought the confession for \$100,000.

Files may have done some extensive reading in prison and he was never anything more than a man who shot and killed a police officer. All he's doing is a favor to

further create inadvertent smoke screens for the true killers. Why else would James Files be alive?

The mob wouldn't let one of the shooters live to talk later. At the outside, Files may have known Charles Nicoletti, whom Files says was one of the shooters in Dealey Plaza, firing from the DalTex building across the street from the book depository. No sound analysis, ballistics reports or eyewitness testimony ever mentioned the DalTex building. A man sticking out the window was later identified as waving to the crowd, not shooting a rifle as first feared. If the mob wanted Oswald to blame, they would have fired shots from the book depository with his own gun. For those who want to see the Files video, Blockbuster bought 10 per store. Look in the closest bin and be prepared to pay 12 bucks.

Questions Forever

Was Kennedy killed for money interest, revenge or his lack of discretion? Putting the pieces of the puzzle together took a long time. The picture it builds in 1997 exposes the death of John F. Kennedy as a different image than the one portrayed in 1963 and subsequent years through published and unpublished information. The picture has become more clear. Finishing the entire puzzle may never occur due to deaths, natural and otherwise, and because of the code of silence those who survive follow.

In the ultimate of ironies, the people who were killed since have helped confirm the trail many tried or wanted to follow. If the Mafia didn't kill Kennedy, many members have been given credit for or alluded to it. Tape recordings, confessions and the money trail all have led to the Mafia. Despite many smokescreens tossed about, the brightest trail leads to those who had the guts, motive and where-withal to shoot him. Anyone who wanted to be taken seriously and spoke or threatened to speak has been conspicuously murdered.

Covered up have been documents of surveillance and field

reports by agents and wiretaps of information about organized crime figures. The documents guarded are the first clue of suspicion to cover up something that has been hidden from the public. Some myths can be eliminated by using the latest in technology and the release of classified material, thus showing a more clear path to the real shooters. The names of the actual gunmen may never be known; the Mafia has a way of eliminating anyone who could reveal the truth of an enormous plot such as this.

One reason to cover up the assassination was to get a shattered country back together by quickly finding a killer and installing a shaken LBJ as president. Exposing the mafia as possible killers would lead to possible violence and heavy anti-Italian sentiment. The Warren Commission was ordered by Hoover to accept Oswald as the lone gunman. The CIA has been exposed for being party to many grievous acts before and after the shooting of JFK. That topic will be explored in the next issue of LVM. If the CIA was involved in the planning stages of Kennedy's death or the death of the president of South Vietnam to ensure war and the dealing of narcotics, the fabric of America would be torn down the middle. CIA man Frank Sturgis was not in Dealey Plaza on Nov. 22, 1963, dressed as a bum, as some believe. Jack Ruby wasn't there. Neither was James Files. Photos and home video prove that all other people have been accounted for that day — all but the shooters. **lvmm**

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the midst of his escalating crusade against organized crime, decided to execute Marcello's deportation, which he did with brutal swiftness on April 4, 1961. While he was at the INS for his quarterly reporting as an alien, Marcello was, as he put it, "handcuffed and kidnapped" and flown 1,200 miles to Guatemala → 102

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City, where he was left with no baggage and whatever money he had in his pockets.

A man of Marcello's character has a way of recovering quickly from such a turn of events and he soon found himself in fine digs at the Biltmore in Guatemala City. Because of local pressure in Guatemala and no doubt some screw-tightening from the United States, Marcello was flown out of the country and dumped in a tiny village in El Salvador, where he was interrogated for five days before being taken 20 miles into the mountains and deserted. Robert Kennedy acknowledged the incident by stating he was happy Marcello was "no longer with us."

When Marcello re-entered the country, shoes full of Salvadoran pebbles, two of his ribs broken and his pride crushed, more troubles awaited aside from charges for illegal entry. The Internal Revenue Service had slapped an \$850,000 tax lien against Marcello and his wife. Marcello knew Bobby was responsible for his troubles. Hitting the younger Kennedy was not the answer. Instead, he allegedly said Bobby would be taken care of in a different way.

Edward Becker, a private investigator at the time and former public relations director for the Riviera Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas, said he was having a conversation with Marcello in 1962. Marcello was usually a man who said little about his work. Becker was speaking about the Kennedy family when, in a surprise to him, he heard Marcello say in Italian he would use a "nut" that could be easily manipulated to "take the stone out of my shoe."

In English, Marcello supposedly said to Becker, "Don't worry about that little Bobby sonofabitch. He's going to be taken care of." Becker

said he spoke to Marcello during a meeting with crime leaders at his 3,000-acre estate outside New Orleans after he legally wrangled his way back into the country. When asked how he would get Bobby off his back, Marcello gave this reply: The dog will keep biting you if you only cut off its tail, but if the dog's head were cut off, the entire dog would die.

Marcello was convinced killing the president would silence the attorney general. He was right, for a time. After the shooting, the committee on organized crime met daily with Bobby Kennedy every day prior to the assassination met no longer. The attorneys and investigators were never asked to return to work on such a group. They, too, may have thought they were next.

The second name on the list of possible conspirators would be the late Santo Trafficante, the mob boss of Florida and surrounding areas, including the once-treasured gambling Mecca of skim-happy Havana. Threats to the Kennedys by both Trafficante and Marcello can be traced to September 1962.

In 1976, Jose Aleman, a wealthy Cuban exile living in Miami, said in the Washington Post that during a meeting to discuss pension fund loans, Trafficante told him the president had been cleared to be assassinated.

"Mark my word, this man Kennedy is in trouble, and he will get what is coming to him," Trafficante allegedly said. Aleman told the committee he disagreed with the crime boss and said he thought President Kennedy had been doing a good job and would be re-elected.

"You don't understand me," Trafficante said. "Kennedy's not going to make it to the election. He is going to be hit."

Trafficante was not harassed by the Kennedys to the extent Marcello was harassed, but he had financial reasons to consider. The politics of the time were causing

Trafficante plenty of headaches. Trafficante owned large shares of hotels in Havana, where he also ran casino operations. The casinos included the Hotel Capri, the Hotel Commodore, the Havana Hilton and Sans Souci, where he worked on soliciting the skim with Johnny Rosselli.

Trafficante was forced to go into hiding in 1959 after Fidel Castro took over in Cuba. Trafficante was terrorized endlessly by Castro's troops, who used to take him into the woods in the middle of the night, interrogating him about where he hid his money. Later in that same year, Trafficante was imprisoned by the Castro regime. While at the same time, Castro reopened casinos around the island to reduce unemployment.

While Trafficante was in prison, he was visited by a courier named Jack Ruby. The FBI said Ruby was picking up the skim. He also brought hand-guns to Cuba twice. Ruby visited Cuba three times, but details of the trips are sketchy.

Trafficante's motivation for killing Castro was theorized by the CIA and led federal agents to discuss killing Castro with the help of the Mafia.

In 1959 a third possible conspirator came into play when the CIA needed a go-between for the Kennedy Administration, the CIA and the Mafia. The man was Johnny Rosselli, a mobster who began working for Al Capone and continued his rise to power by setting up union corruption for movie guilds and setting up the skim for numerous Las Vegas casinos. The man chosen to set up the connection was CIA operative and future Howard Hughes right-hand man Robert A. Maheu. The plan was to assassinate Castro and take the island back to satisfy mutual political and financial interests.

"It's not exactly a well-guarded secret," Maheu said recently in an interview from his Las Vegas home. "It's really an old story."

Also not a secret is the anger

generated against Kennedy by members of the CIA about the disgraceful military failure when the president refused to sanction air cover to protect 1,000 Bay of Pigs invaders in April 1961. Without air support, the invasion failed, and Castro remains in Cuba to this day.

"It made me absolutely furious," Maheu said. "We should have stopped the invasion. Instead, we let those kids go in there and get clobbered by the hardware that should have been destroyed hours earlier by an air raid."

Indeed, Maheu still is angry.

"It's horrible when you think the CIA has to stand there and take the responsibility for the fiasco, when it was fact it was not [the agency's] fault."

Maheu does not believe that there was a conspiracy behind the Kennedy assassination.

"I personally truly believe the conclusion of the Warren Report," said Maheu, who added he thinks the Warren Commission "made a serious mistake by calling it quits while a lot of leads were left open," giving fodder to the so-called conspiracy experts.

The unholy alliance included Chicago crime boss Sam Giancana, the fourth possible conspirator and man responsible for getting all those dead people and many live ones to vote for JFK in Illinois. Voting fraud was eventually exposed in Chicago that proved the fix far too late. Getting the vote out made Kennedy a winner, Giancana believed, and he was owed a debt that was never paid, the halting of the constant harassment he was getting from the feds.

Giancana, who was described by Chicago Police Department records as "an ill-tempered, sadistic psychopath," also laid a large claim on the vast territory of Las Vegas. The desert dream of Bugsy Siegel helped create an open city that was first-come, first-served for those who wanted a casino to skim

money for each of the mob's sponsoring territories.

For Giancana, his role in killing the president may have stemmed from the violation of respect and trust. He felt he had been double-crossed too many times by the Kennedys. Giancana, with the admitted help of Rosselli, allegedly covered up for Kennedy in at least one annulled marriage and mistress Judith Campbell.

Most galling to Giancana was the double cross he experienced by Joseph Kennedy. Organized crime figures recognized Joe Kennedy as one of their own and no better than one member of any organization. They didn't buy into the indestructible Kennedy mystique that had been so carefully woven. Joe Kennedy to the mob was a bootlegger, a rum runner who owed Giancana. Rosselli thought of Kennedy as a man who owed him for covering up his son's indiscretions with women before and after being elected.

When Trafficante, Rosselli and Giancana were approached for killing Castro and then paid \$150,000, they said yes. Maheu and Rosselli both admitted the same event publicly. The money was not a factor, as it represented chump change to Mafia bosses. They had much larger interests to protect. Everything from poison-laced cigars to cancer-causing injections into food were attempted on Castro with no success. After many failures and the capture and torture of some exposed conspirators who were close to Castro, evidence pointed to the fact that the mob changed directions.

Trafficante, however, may have played both sides of the fence by feeding Castro information about the invasion and the plots to kill him as reward for letting him leave the country with money and life in tact. Castro may have had the advantage of turning America's most vicious criminals against their own government.

Trafficante also may have had another sinister reason for plotting to kill the president. A theory has been asserted often that Kennedy was not a friend of the military industrial consortium and was getting soft about Vietnam. His intentions, many insist, were to back away from Vietnam, thus risking organized crime ventures into the harvesting of drugs overseas and selling them in the United States. Trafficante, in particular, had an interest in Southeast Asia.

The CIA's interest in drug trafficking was exposed in the Iran-Contra affair and the agency is under siege again with the recent accusations that it introduced crack into American cities. The CIA had been discovered using money to support drug-dealing operations in cities by Kennedy and after the botched Bay of Pigs fiasco in which he blamed the CIA, Kennedy said he was thinking of doing away with the agency.

Some conspiracy buffs believe because the CIA and organized crime have both been willing to kill to keep an operation in tact in the past, the link is there to make the leap, a big leap that stands without proof.

Kennedy Indiscretions

In the years before World War II, Kennedy was working for the U.S. Navy in Washington, D.C. While there, he became involved with, and as some biographers have claimed, married a former Miss Denmark, who had been married twice already. Her name was Inga Arvad and the problem facing Kennedy outside of the Catholic family honor was her being married before. Arvad also had connections to many high-ranking Nazis, including Adolph Hitler himself.

The marriage reportedly had to be annulled with the help of Rosselli. It has been asserted that Rosselli made the arrangements for Joseph Kennedy by having → 104

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the document expunged from public record.

Numerous accounts say Joseph Kennedy was forced to first turn to Giancana for help in 1956. Frank Costello wanted the elder Kennedy to front a piece of property for him. Joe Kennedy realized that any mob connection at this point could spoil his son's chances at being president. The result of this refusal was a contract on Joe Kennedy's life. Joe Kennedy met with Giancana after hearing of this and reportedly had to beg for his life. Giancana had the contract canceled, but there was a price: Giancana told Kennedy if his son were elected, the mob would have their man on the inside. Joe Kennedy had little choice but to play ball.

To fix the election of 1960, Daley wasn't guessing. He knew Kennedy would win. Giancana's mob muscle, coupled with the Daley machine, assured whatever vote count was needed. Election fraud exposed since has found some deceased voted as many as eight times. Behind-the-scenes work in Texas also helped carry that state. The New Orleans-Dallas connection with organized crime is said to have turned out the same results. Kennedy was their man. Not much time passed before Giancana saw Bobby Kennedy's crusade as going back on his deal with Joseph Kennedy.

John Kennedy would make another error in his dealings with Giancana, perhaps the last one, with mob princess and Hollywood starlet Judith Campbell.

In his book, *A Question of Character*, Thomas C. Reeves reveals a story of how Campbell, later Exner, had arranged 10 different meetings between John Kennedy and Giancana. She also

was used as a courier between Kennedy, Giancana and Rosselli, carrying envelopes across the country and delivering them by hand. Campbell said she had no idea what was in those envelopes. Speculation has the envelopes containing confidential FBI memos, gave Giancana information of FBI wiretaps and information about operations the agency was directing against organized crime. At the same time, Bobby Kennedy was asking for J. Edgar Hoover's help in intensifying efforts against the mob. An FBI wiretap between Rosselli and Giancana reveals the Chicago boss may have run out of patience. In the FBI transcript, Rosselli talks to an angry Giancana about taking pressure off through Frank Sinatra, the mob's man on the inside. Sinatra, who befriended Giancana and met and talked to Rosselli many times, was trying to do more than accommodate a young president: he had ambitions.

Giancana lost faith in Sinatra after the entertainer assured him everything was under control and the information coming from the White House was first rate. Sinatra simply did not know what was going at the White House and things got worse when he was exposed for keeping company with known gangsters. Kennedy had cut Sinatra off and Giancana had figured everything out from a call with Rosselli, taped by the FBI:

Rosselli: "Between you and me, Frank saw Joe Kennedy three different times. Joe Kennedy, the father — he called him three times."

Giancana: "Called who?"

Rosselli: "Called Frank. So maybe he's starting to see the light. You're friends. He's got it in his head they're not faithful to them. That's what I'm trying to get in his head."

Giancana: "In other words, the [campaign] contribution that was made..."

Rosselli: "...That's what I was talking about."

Giancana: "He had to pay for it regardless."

Rosselli: "He's got an idea that you're mad at him. I says that I wouldn't know."

Giancana: "He must have a guilty conscience. I never said nothing. Well, I don't know who the f--- he's [Sinatra] talking to. After all, if I'm taking somebody's money, I'm gonna make sure the money is going to do something like, do you want it or don't you want it? If the money is accepted, maybe one of these days the guy will do me a favor."

Later in the conversation:

Rosselli: "He's got big ideas, Frank does, about being ambassador or something. You know Pierre Salinger and them guys, they don't want him. They treat him like a whore. You f--- them, you pay them, and then they're through. You got the right idea, Moe (a Giancana nickname), go the other way. F--- everybody. We'll use them every f--- way we can. They only know one way. Now let them see the other side of you."

FBI and CIA wiretaps and field reports have revealed much before and after the shooting. The FBI found out in 1961 that Kennedy and Campbell were intimate, ironically from a wiretap on Rosselli. The FBI learned some 70 calls were made by Campbell to the White House. Campbell was introduced to Kennedy by Sinatra, who once dated Campbell. Giancana thought Campbell was finding out what was really going on in the White House, something Sinatra was supposed to do, but could not. Neither of them, as history has revealed, gave any information to Giancana of any substance. He was being duped.

Through his affair with Campbell, Kennedy crossed two lines drawn by the mafia: Do not accept money or sexual favors without expecting to pay them back.

Who Shot JFK?

The time had come for action. Kennedy was to ride in an open car in Dallas. The next election was nearing and Kennedy looked a sure winner. Crime bosses across the country never make large decisions on their own. Thus, the speculated involvement and approval of bosses from the major cities, with a go-between like Rosselli, linger about.

Conspiracy theorists say each mob boss was asked to contribute manpower, connections and money. One account has Marcello's two manpower contributions in his own territory coming from Jack Lawrence and Charles Harrelson. Lawrence worked for a car lot and was considered by a source as someone who wouldn't do anything worse "than borrow a car once in a while."

Harrelson reportedly had the reputation as a hit man and was convicted in Texas of killing a federal judge. Harrelson denied killing JFK in an interview, saying that if he had, he wouldn't still be alive. Investigators and the FBI place Harrelson in Houston the days surrounding the shooting. Harrelson, while telling his side in prison, said he was with his girlfriend in Houston. Authorities and investigators have never located the woman.

Harrelson is serving two life terms for killing Judge John Wood. At Harrelson's trial, the contractor of the killing said he hired Harrelson because Harrelson told him he killed JFK. Harrelson was first thought to be one of the tramps arrested shortly after the shooting, but it has since been proved he was not. When shown a picture of the tramp while in prison, Harrelson said it looked like him, but wasn't. All three tramps taken into custody still are accounted for, with one dead, one a successful businessman in Florida and the other a tramp off and on over the years.

Harrelson had the card of a known associate of Jack Ruby's, Russell Matthews, on him when he

was arrested for the judge's murder, which his son, Woody Harrelson, said is part of conspiracy to frame his father. The actor has spent a fortune on trying to gain his release, although he said his father hinted at knowing something about the shooting. Matthews had worked for Trafficante in Cuba before Castro's rise to power, thus posing another link.

Conspiracy theorists say Trafficante may have recruited two Cuban exiles for the job, while Giancana contributed three men. Some books have alleged the Chicago contingent consisted of Charles (Chucky) Nicoletti, Milwaukee Phil Alderisio and Richard Cain, alias Richard Scalzitti, an alleged CIA operative and marksman trained by the Chicago Police Department. Las Vegas Magazine has learned that Cain had poor eyesight at the time and probably would not have been employed as a shooter.

Oswald's ties to organized crime cannot be discounted. His uncle, whom he lived with near New Orleans, Charles Murret, was working for Carlo Marcello. Someone who helped with gambling joints, Murret was supposedly a strong influence on Oswald when he was growing up. FBI files show Oswald went to the Murret's home on a weekly basis before he enlisted in the Marines.

Misinformation

According to information given to Jack Anderson and the Church Committee in 1976, Rosselli tried to link the killing to Castro, not the mob. Speaking through Edward P. Morgan, an attorney for Maheu, Rosselli said the president was killed because of attempts on Castro's life. This theory is discarded because many have said Rosselli lied to create more misinformation and lead the trail away from organized crime. Rosselli partially succeeded, but an attempt by Castro on Kennedy's life would have meant risking his own.

According to Rosselli, all the Cubans in Dealey Plaza were working for Trafficante, and Oswald was merely a decoy. The decoy part was correct, but that exposure, plus the fact Rosselli was to be recalled in front of the Church Hearings, got the gangster killed. Mob hit man Jimmy Fratianno said Rosselli told him the testimony in front of the Church Committee and what he said to Anderson were a smoke-screen to get his Friar's Club conviction overturned in order to get a license and a grip on a Las Vegas hotel/casino. Rosselli's killers have never been found, although he was found in Miami to also implicate the aging Trafficante, who died of natural causes.

Rosselli's testimony was the first to say Kennedy was killed by a shot from the front, now known as the shot from the grassy knoll. In 1978 acoustics tests performed on the sound track from the dictabelt confirmed four shots.

In the Church Committee's report to study government operations with respect to intelligence activities, it is said in 1978 that shots one and two came from behind the president. Shot three or four, the shot that tosses Kennedy's head backward in the Zapruder film, is now said to have come from from the grassy knoll. The shots were recorded from a microphone 150 feet behind the president. Acoustic evidence can't pinpoint whether shot three or four is the head shot.

Rosselli had said more than he should have said, but it was too late to take it back. Rosselli's contract was fulfilled on July 28, 1976, when he was killed and stuffed in a 55-gallon drum and thrown into Dumbfoundling Bay in Florida. Rosselli was shot in the stomach, then had the bullet carved out after an entry wound from throat to abdomen. The cause of death was listed as asphyxiation. Rosselli also had his legs sawed off at mid-thigh to fit him in a drum. Had a fisherman not seen the drum rise from → 106

THE MURDER OF JFK— REPLACING THE MYSTICAL WITH HISTORICAL TRUTH

gasses caused by decomposition, Rosselli's body would never have been found. The Dade County Coroner said in a few more days, the drum would have sunk to the bottom.

Giancana, who met a similar fate on July 19, 1975, while in the basement of his suburban-style Chicago home, was shot in the back of the head while cooking sausages and peppers in his basement kitchen. Reports of his being shot in the face and throat do not match the coroner's report or TV news footage of the body being taken from the house. The killing took place only five days before Giancana was to testify before the Church Committee. Someone believed him when he said he would do or say anything to not rot in jail.

What They Say Today

Among the biggest believers in the organized crime theory are former justice department employee G. Robert Blakey and former Life Magazine reporter Richard Billings, who noted about the mob: "You are all right, it is said, just as long as you do not sleep with them, that is, you do not take favors, either money or sex." The words are from *The Plot to Kill the President* (hardback) and *Fatal Hour* (paperback) penned by Blakey and Billings. Blakey, a former Cornell University law professor, served more than two years as the chief counsel to the House Select Committee on Assassinations, which concluded in 1978 that "there probably was a conspiracy" in the death of JFK.

The committee was formed in 1976 by Congress in an effort to try to uphold the much-maligned Warren report and assure the nation

that it was Oswald, "the lone nut," who killed JFK.

Oswald may have had little motivation to kill JFK, although LVM has learned his mother alleged he worked for the U.S. State Department as a spy. Sources say Oswald's mother traveled to Washington to inquire about her son at the State Department when he was unheard from for a long period of time in Russia.

After reviewing the evidence, including photographs, recordings and witness reports indicating that four shots were fired on that sunny day in Dallas on Nov. 22, the committee reasoned that JFK was caught in a crossfire in Dealey Plaza. Particularly persuasive to members of the committee was the dictabelt recording from the police motorcycle during the shooting that indicated "with a probability of 95 percent or better" that at least one shot was fired from the grassy knoll.

There was other evidence concerning Kennedy's behavior, attitudes and policies in the late 1950s and early 1960s that steered Blakey to one conclusion regarding the identity of the conspirators.

"I am now of the opinion that the mob did it," Blakey said after the commission wrapped up its work. "It is a historical truth."

From wiretaps and interviews of mob leaders during and after the New Frontier, crime bosses indicated they believed Kennedy recklessly bit the hands of mobsters who fed him.

"It was Giancana's strength along with the help of a couple of unions that helped Kennedy win West Virginia and Illinois," said John L. Smith, columnist for the Las Vegas Review-Journal, who has written about the mob for 10 years. "Kennedy is not unique in that regard," Smith said. "Richard Nixon is the man who pardoned Jimmy Hoffa after receiving a letter from [former Nevada Senator] Paul Laxalt.

That's part of history."

Kennedy was vehement in the way he waged war on organized crime. Indeed, in 1960, before the Kennedy administration, there were only 35 convictions for offenses connected with organized crime. In 1963, there were nearly 300 convictions.

Before the Kennedy era, Organized Crime Section lawyers spent 61 days in court and 660 days working investigations. In the last 12 months of JFK's administration, the government attorneys spent more than 1,000 days in court and more than 6,000 days in the field. Ralph Salerno, the former chief investigator of organized crime in New York City, noted, "The end of an era had come, and they recognized it."

Guarding The Secret

The hardest part in determining the truth, researchers say, is sifting out good information from bad. The secret of John F. Kennedy's death has been kept for a long time, but eventually has unraveled. Other Kennedy plots in the works were uncovered by the FBI and other undercover organizations, but none are talked about at length. Most fingers now are pointing at organized crime; 34 years have passed to find only mere insinuations.

Many of those who have talked, or had anything to do with the Kennedy assassination, have died, by bludgeoning murder or tainted suicides. To date, it is alleged that 38 people have been murdered who had anything to say or do with the plot.

Killing is the only way to silence a conspiracy. That killing has left a trail for future generations to follow and perhaps solve the most intriguing puzzle in history. There still are answers from people left alive who can confirm a conspiracy, but true justice is forever unattainable. **lvw**

Presidential hopeful John F. Kennedy visited the Clan outside the Sands during the filming of *Ocean's Eleven* in early 1960. Others in the photo include director Lewis Milestone (back turned), Dean Martin (left of Milestone), Buddy Lester, Joey Bishop, Sammy Davis, Jr., and Frank Sinatra.

JFK at the Sands

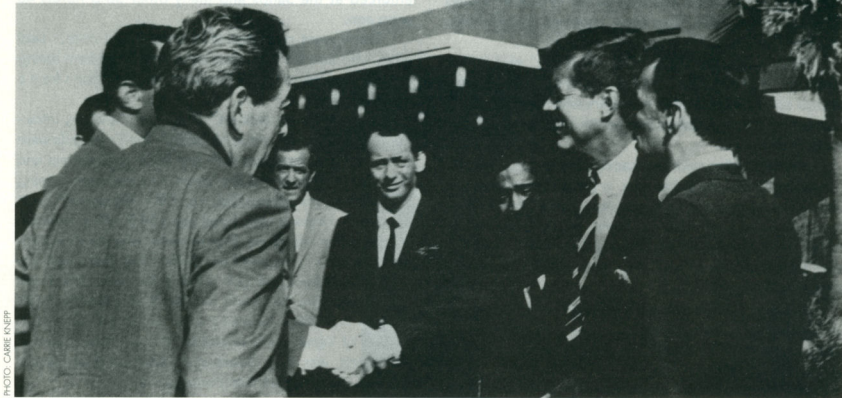


PHOTO: CARRE ENFER

KENNEDY was one key figure who 'PLAYED' THERE

"A place in the

That's what the gamblers and mobsters called the fabulous Sands hotel when it opened in 1953. Within a few years, the hotel evolved into a plushly carpeted playground for world celebrities. It was an adult fantasyland ruled by the likes of Sinatra, Martin and Davis.

It was a place where, seemingly, anything went. But, obfuscated by a seemingly constant chaos of laughter, booze and broads was a set of rules. They were simple, really: You don't steal from "the boys." You don't sleep with their women. Finally, you never bite the hand that feeds you.

Even today, there are those who believe that it was the sheer bravado of the Sands' most honored guest — John F. Kennedy — that helped lead him to his destiny in yet another place in the sun 10 years after the Sands was built: Dallas.

For it was at the Sands that Kennedy cavorted with dancers and showgirls who were on mobsters' payrolls. At the Sands, he met and began a two-year affair with a

Hollywood starlet named Judy Campbell, who later dated Chicago crime boss Sam Giancana.

"Jack knew all about Sam and me," Campbell said in 1983, when she was known throughout the world as Judith Campbell Exner, the president's girlfriend and Mafia mistress. "Yes, he [Kennedy] was jealous."

Today, Kennedy's weakness for women is acknowledged by anyone who hasn't slept through the past 30 years. Many researchers believe it's this weakness, along with Kennedy's longstanding war on organized crime and the mishaps of the Bay of Pigs that led to his death. The code of organized crime is to punish people who suffer from their own indiscretions.

"Listen, honey, if it wasn't for me, your boyfriend wouldn't even be in the White House," Giancana often told Campbell.

Campbell, 25, had been introduced to then-Senator Kennedy on Feb. 8, 1960, by ex-boyfriend Frank Sinatra in one of the suites at the Sands.

"Actually, where he [Kennedy] went was not a suite, but one of the [ground level] bungalows toward

the back of the Sands property," said John L. Smith of the Las Vegas Review-Journal. "I've been to those bungalows. They're real nice, each with its own pool."

Today, several of the former dancers and showgirls, who cavorted with Rat Pack members Sinatra, Martin, Davis and company following legendary performances in the Sands' Copa Room, said they do not remember seeing Kennedy at the hotel. They knew, however, that Kennedy was there.

"No, I never saw him, but he was there," said former Copa girl Valerie Allen, who noted that Kennedy was always surrounded by staff members who were intent on protecting the reputation and health of the Democratic Party's frontrunner.

"After all," Allen said, "he was running for president."

As for Campbell Exner: she is battling metastasized breast cancer and is refusing all requests for interviews — save one recent one from her friend, gossip columnist Liz Smith, who reported in the January edition of *Vanity Fair* that Campbell Exner aborted JFK's child 10 months before he was assassinated.

Jim Lesar, Campbell Exner's attorney, said his client is very ill and really isn't interested in talking any more about Kennedy, except to clarify "a lie published by *Random House*."

Lesar was referring to a statement by Laurence Leamer, who quotes Milt Ebbins, Peter Lawford's personal manager, in the book *The Kennedy Women*, as saying that Campbell Exner engaged in prostitution with JFK.

"It's not true," Lesar said.

Indeed, in the *Vanity Fair* article, Campbell Exner said she was hopelessly in love with Kennedy, who "swept me off my feet."

Still, Campbell Exner saw the dark side of the architect of the New Frontier.

"He was so arrogant. He felt there was one law for him and another for others," she told Smith.

Those who have any knowledge of the underworld say that in the eyes of mobsters, the code of correct behavior adheres to everyone — from common street capones on up to the highest royalty.

After all, as Smith wryly notes, in the underworld it is believed that people are not that different — whether they run a casino or a powerful nation.

"There's always been a close association between mobsters, gamblers and politicians, and that's the reality of America," Smith said. "After all, the mother's milk of politics is money."

It also stands to reason that if the mobsters who were behind the scenes of the Sands and other casinos in Las Vegas in the 1950s and early 1960s believed in these close associations, they also believed in a common code for everyone.

Did Kennedy break that code by carrying on a relationship with Campbell Exner, a girlfriend of a Mafia crime boss, as he was waging war on the underworld and soften-

ing his approach toward communist Cuba?

"To us, all that stuff was for the movies," Allen said. "It wasn't real. These people [who ran the casinos] couldn't possibly commit these horrible acts that you sometimes heard about. They were so respectful to us."

Allen remembers one code of conduct that was strictly enforced at the Sands and many other Strip hotels 40 years ago.

"There were rules about who we could date," said Allen, who said the Copa girls were prohibited from dating others who worked for the hotel without permission from a casino official.

"This was clearly defined," Allen said, "and any infraction of that rule was not acceptable." The Copa girls were encouraged to fraternize with gamblers, entertainers and other honored guests of the Sands, to keep them coming back. The Sands opened Dec. 15, 1952, the seventh hotel on the L.A. Highway. The hotel was a \$5.5 million addition to the La Rue restaurant. Jack Entratter was the show producer and the Copa girls were the first line, then supplanted by the Texas Copa girls a few years later. The Texas Copa girls were 16 young women from Texas brought here to learn how to dance after winning a contest in regions of Texas. Jackie Friedman, the principal owner of the Sands, was from Texas and knew gamblers would come to see girls from their home towns.

"He had always wanted a line of all Texas girls," remembers Virginia James, one of the original Texas Copa girls, sometimes called the Pony Line. James won one of the beauty pageants in Texas, hopped a plane for Vegas, learned how to dance and instantly became a showgirl in 1957.

"We had to dress up beautifully and grace the lounge and casinos after the shows — they called it mixing," James says. "You had to mix until a certain time, then you could go home if you wanted. I loved it. You were instantly recognized as a showgirl by being pretty and the makeup and clothes you wore."

"The Sands was the biggest game in town then, and we were just little players in that big game," James says. "But, you wanted to go to work. There was always a movie star or more around and every night you could meet someone. Every night was one big party. When gamblers or celebrities took you out, they treated you with class. We went and ate with them in the gourmet rooms or wherever we wanted. Whatever you wanted, it was there. It was like being in the movies. We were treated royalty."

There were incidents when a high roller picked a girl from the show to be with, but James said she was never forced to be with anyone by management. Most of the women mingled voluntarily with the gamblers James says, "because they were generous and handsome. The high rollers were always staying at the Sands and had huge parties that were catered and had music. All the stars would come around. When you met someone nice, there was a whole evening of fun with men who had class."

"They [showgirls] had to be free for the high rollers and the stars coming in and out of town," says Harvey Allen,

communications professor at Clark County Community College, who worked as a production singer in the Copa Room in the 1950s and 1960s.

"A lot of times, the girls were invited to go as a group to parties, and maybe three, four or five of us would go," former Copa girl Charlotte Nort remembers. "At many of these parties, there would be food and booze available all night. It would always be daylight by the time we got out." Like many who lived and worked in Las Vegas during the early days of the Sands hotel, Nort says "things were better" back then.

"Today, the casinos are like factories. You clock in and out. It wasn't like that back then," Nort recollects. "We used to get turkeys at Thanksgiving and bonuses at Christmas, and if you worked hard and didn't drink too much or steal, you never got fired."

If you did steal or dated someone you shouldn't?

"They had their own ways of dealing with that," Nort remembers. "Usually, they just let you go, and you'd have to get a job somewhere else."

Allen remembers that the boys had other ways of dealing with problem employees.

"There were certain people employed by the Sands, and these people were enforcers who would break the arms and legs of people, and the media would cooperate and not write about it," Allen says.

Security was always a high priority at the Sands.

In 1954, just over a year after the hotel was built, Friedman ordered television cameras installed over the pit to detect cheating by both employees and gamblers.

"They've used TV on the battlefields, in factories and post offices, so why not in a gambling place?" Friedman told a reporter in 1977.

The Sands security system marked the first time security cameras had been installed in a casino, and it led to the development of the sophisticated security eye-in-the-sky system that's in use in all major casinos today. Many casinos took justice into their own hands.

"Look at the people who were killed in this town," Allen says. "They used to find the skeletons in the desert. We just took it in stride."

Allen noted that the mob was involved with practically every casino job in Las Vegas during those days.

"It was a juice town," Allen says. "If you knew the right people, you got the right jobs — the valet jobs and the bell jobs. They were plums. Of course, you had to pay the right people."

Nort believes Las Vegas was a better place to live in the days when Sinatra, Martin and Kennedy ruled at the Sands.

"You felt safe wherever you went," Nort says. "You could go anywhere alone at night, and if you had been gambling, you could use casino checks [chips] as money at the grocery stores and movie houses."

Allen is not so sure the town was better then. "How could you say it was better when they found bodies in the desert?" **ivm**

THE REAL STORY BEHIND THE SINATRA PUNCHOUT AT THE SANDS

BY RICHARD S. GUBBE

Everyone knows how tall tales spring up from little sprouts. One sprout from a Sinatra spin-off needs to be clipped.

Las Vegas Maga-zine, through eyewitness testimony and other confidential sources, would like to clarify what actually happened between Frank Sinatra and the Sands Hotel in 1956.

The events that led to a fight between Sinatra and Sands Executive Vice President Carl Cohen began two nights earlier. Sinatra, who had been having problems with wife Mia Farrow, bolted from Las Vegas to Palm Springs on the Friday he was to go on as a headliner at the Sands. The Sands got stiffed and had to cancel the shows (tough to do any without a headliner). Sinatra stayed in Palm Springs and after stiffing the Sands for three straight days of shows, Sinatra came back during the wee hours of the morning on Sunday/Monday.

Sinatra came into the hotel loaded, sources say, asking for a credit line of \$100,000. Immediately, Sinatra was referred to Carl Cohen, who was the acting boss stationed near the registration desk off the casino floor.

"I want a \$100,000 credit line, you Jew bastard," Sinatra said to Cohen. Reportedly, without verbal response, Cohen slugged Sinatra in the mouth. → 107



PHOTO: CAROL KATZ

THE REAL STORY BEHIND THE SINATRA PUNCH-OUT AT THE SANDS



The after-4 a.m. confrontation has been reported many ways by people who could not and would not have seen the event at that hour. What actually happened to Sinatra's teeth has been exaggerated over the years.

Sinatra had caps over his front teeth for years. Many people have appeared on national television and in books to say Frank's teeth were knocked out, but they are mistaken.

Cohen, remembered as one of the more polite and refined casino executives, later testified to friends his account of what happened. He told them he knocked off Sinatra's caps and that was that: no credit line, no teeth on the floor. Sinatra obviously underestimated Cohen, who needless to say, had a short fuse for racial slurs.

Sources other than Cohen's confidants have confirmed that only Sinatra's caps were knocked out, yet an Arts & Entertainment network documentary that aired recently has a former Las Vegas showgirl claiming that Sinatra's teeth were on the floor. These more reliable accounts say the A&E story was exaggerated by someone who never even saw the event.

Cohen had juice as an executive in the mob-controlled Sands and he had a reputation as a smooth ladies' man and a casino powerhouse that no one should want to tangle with. . . not even Sinatra. **lvw**

WOLFGANG ADLER

his music and art studies. After three years, he graduated in both disciplines and was well on his way to a promising musical career. His chamber music teacher and the dean of the music conservatory in Brussels selected Adler to be the principal clarinet player in Dublin, Ireland, with the Radio Symphony Orchestra.

His musical career led him to many exotic European cities and their respective symphonies, and he always had his caricature craft to fall back on, painting portraits on the Champs Elysees and Montmartre in Paris. But his life began again in North America. His father moved to Toronto, Canada, and Adler soon followed. He joined the Toronto Philharmonic, and he gave several chamber music recitals on Canadian radio. Soon, another young artist, a pianist he read about in the newspaper, caught his eye.

"Shortly after I arrived, I read in all the papers about Muriel Albert's recital in Carnegie Hall, a child prodigy who was so beautiful, I cut out her picture and carried it in my wallet for three years because that was the girl I wanted to marry," Adler muses.

"We used to live around the corner from each other. I didn't want to meet her on my own. I wanted to be introduced by a mutual friend, but we didn't have any mutual friends. I just looked at her waiting for the bus."

His moment came in the summer of 1953. He was playing chamber music concerts under such conductors as Carlos Chavez, Leonard Bernstein and Charles Munch. His piano accompaniment was provided by a girl who knew Muriel Albert, and she asked Adler if he knew her since he lived in the same city.

"I don't know her yet," he replied, "but I'm going to marry her. She gave me a phone number to call. Muriel and I met, and after four

meetings, we got engaged."

Muriel was invited to teach piano in the Henry Street Settlement in New York, a distinguished music school for underprivileged children, while Wolf Adler was asked to join the Boston Pops. Soon after, they were married in New York City Hall.

Once again, Wolf Adler was on the move. He played in pickup orchestras and joined such celebrated musical companies as the St. Louis Symphony, where he played bass clarinet in E flat and was the assistant principal clarinetist. He was also in the Tulsa Philharmonic and the Denver Symphony.

However, the move to Denver fared poorly for Muriel, who developed rheumatoid arthritis. The high altitude caused her painful condition and the malady hindered her ability to play the piano. Just west of the great Rocky Mountains, however, Muriel found relief.

"In 1961, while on vacation, we stopped off in Las Vegas for a week-end to visit some friends," Wolf Adler explains. "Muriel felt great here because of the hot and dry climate; all her aches and pains disappeared and she said Las Vegas is where she wanted to live. Two years later, when my contract with the Denver Symphony expired, we moved here."

Muriel Adler resumed giving piano lessons and Wolf Adler started drawing caricatures professionally again. He also wrote a column for the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* where he sketched celebrities and analyzed their handwriting. Together, the dynamic couple started its own chamber group called the Nevada Chamber Ensemble.

With all of his impressive accomplishments, however, Wolf Adler's face especially brightens when he talks about the birth of son David in 1967. This momentous event epitomized the ultimate confirmation of survival and triumph, both for a Jewish man and an entire people marked for extinction many years ago. **lvw**